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Прегледни рад

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## **COMMUNICATION VERBS ASK, SAY, AND TELL IN ADVERBIAL CLAUSES IN WRITTEN AND SPOKEN DISCOURSE**

*This paper deals with communication verbs ask, say, and tell as verbals within adverbial clauses. Adverbial clauses acting as modifiers specify circumstances such as time, frequency, manner, degree, place, reason, cause, condition and so on. The aim of this paper is to analyze the frequency of above-mentioned verbs in different types of adverbial clauses, present similarities and dissimilarities in the specific adverbial clauses, and describe the specific features related to each verb. This paper will also determine certain features of the selected verbs as well as their practical use and distribution in spoken and written corpus of English. Taking into account that this type of subordinate clause is not extensively examined, we consider that this paper will give a significant contribution to research of adverbial clauses in the English language.*

**Key words:** *communication verbs, adverbial clauses, frequency, subordination.*

### **Introduction**

Subordinators/Subordinating conjunctions introduce subordinate clauses, connecting two clauses which have a different grammatical status (Đorđević 2007: 723).

In sentential structure, subordinate clauses may perform the function of subject and object, subject complement and object complement, post-modifier in noun phrase, prepositional complement and adjectival complement.

On the basis of their potential functions, we distinguish several major categories of subordinate clauses: nominal, adverbial, relative and compar-

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ative. According to Quirk(1985: 1047), functional classification resembles to some extent that of subclausal units such as noun phrases and adverbs.

As already stated, the subject of this research is adverbial clauses, which represent one of the major categories of subordinate clauses. Communicative verbs *ask*, *tell* and *say* are the focus of this research and the analysis itself is related to the frequency of use of these verbs within each type of adverbial clauses.

The corpus for the research conducted consists of newspapers columns: economy, politics, culture, sport, and technology as well as short stories and speech, each one containing 1 million words.

### Results

Based on the analyzed register of written and spoken discourse, the verb *say* is the most frequently used in adverbial clauses, followed with the verb *ask*.

A detailed frequency of the verbs *say* and *ask* within each subclass of adverbial clauses is shown in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. The frequency of the verb *say* in adverbial clauses

Say							
	Economy	Culture	Politics	Sport	Technology	Short stories	Speech
Clauses of Time	123	35	112	33	34	56	62
Clauses of Manner	13	6	22	10	4	14	58
Clauses of Condition	7	5	3	2	6	4	30
Reason Clauses	3	11	6	12	6	3	60
Clauses of Concession	15	6	10	7	10	8	4
Clauses of Place	7	7	4	3	4	/	21
Clauses of Comparison	/	6	3	2	1	5	5
Clauses of Result	/	2	/	1	/	12	6
Clauses of Exception	1	2	/	1	1	3	2
Clauses of Proportion	/	1	/	1	1	1	/
Clauses of Contrast	6	/	/	/	/	1	3
Clauses of Purpose	/	/	/	/	/	1	1
Clauses of Preference	/	/	/	/	1	/	/
Clauses of Contingency	3	3	9	6	1	12	16
Comment clauses	10	/	28	32	/	36	70
Clauses of degree	1	/	/	/	/	/	/

Table 2. The frequency of the verb ask in adverbial clauses

Ask							
	Economy	Culture	Politics	Sport	Technology	Short stories	Speech
Clauses of Time	26	43	45	98	45	56	23
Clauses of Manner	/	1	/	1	/	4	/
Clauses of Condition	6	1	3	10	8	6	11
Reason Clauses	1	3	2	/	1	1	5
Clauses of Concession	/	/	2	1	1	2	/
Clauses of Place	/	1	1	1	4	3	4
Clauses of Comparison	3	/	/	/	/	/	/
Clauses of Result	/	1	/	/	/	1	7
Clauses of Exception	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Clauses of Proportion	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Clauses of Contrast	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Clauses of Purpose	/	/	2	/	/	1	/
Clauses of Preference	/	1	/	/	/	/	/
Clauses of Contingency	1	2	3	1	1	1	1
Comment clauses	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Clauses of degree	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

The verb *tell* is less frequently used in adverbial clauses, and the most frequently in clauses of time. The verb *tell* is not used within the clauses of proportion, comment and degree clauses. The detailed frequency of the verb *tell* is shown in the table 3.

Table 3. The frequency of the verb tell in adverbial clauses

Tell							
	Economy	Culture	Politics	Sport	Technology	Short stories	Speech
Clauses of Time	20	33	22	21	18	75	18
Clauses of Manner	/	/	6	4	2	15	3
Clauses of Condition	1	4	3	3	3	11	11
Reason Clauses	/	4	4	/	2	10	2
Clauses of Concession	1	3	1	/	1	/	/
Clauses of Place	/	2	2	1	2	2	3
Clauses of Comparison	/	3	2	2	2	5	1
Clauses of Result	/	2	1	3	2	14	1
Clauses of Exception	/	/	1	1	/	/	/
Clauses of Proportion	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Clauses of Contrast	/	/	1	/	/	/	/
Clauses of Purpose	/	/	/	1	/	4	/
Clauses of Preference	/	1	/	/	/	/	/
Clauses of Contingency	/	2	/	1	2	5	5
Comment clauses	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Clauses of degree	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

Generally speaking, the most dominant subclasses of adverbial clauses are **clauses of time**, which occur with the verbs *tell*, *ask* and *say* in all corpora except speech, where clauses of time, reason and manner are equally represented. The most frequent subordinator introducing clauses of time is the subordinator *when* which is combined with the verb *ask* in all corpora. Most of these examples with the verb *ask* are found in the sports column and with the verb *say* in politics:

*When I asked him to comment*, Innocent Adams confirmed he had refused to apologise to his daughter and ex-wife, because he didn't feel he had anything to apologise for.

Generally speaking, the subordinator *when* is the most frequent subordinator, but in some corpora such as technology and economy the subordinator *after* is more frequently combined with the verb *say*, while in economy and politics subordinators *when* and *after* are almost equally used with the verb *tell*:

Housebuilders are also higher **after** *Nationwide said house prices rose in August*.

As for the rest of the subordinators introducing clauses of time, it is also important to mention the subordinator *as* which frequently combines with the verb *say* in the culture column:

Andrea Swift touched her daughter's hand **as** *McFarland said the photograph taken during the meet-and-greet meant nothing*.

The presence of subordinators *while*, *as long as*, *as soon as*, *before*, *now that*, *once*, *since* and *until* has also been registered but only in few examples while subordinators *directly*, *immediately*, *so long as*, *till* and *whilst* are not found.

The verb *say* is very frequently used within the **clauses of manner**, and most of these examples are found in speech. This subclass of adverbial clauses rarely combines with the verb *ask*, and it never happens in the columns of economy, speech, politics and technology. The most dominant subordinator introducing these clauses is the subordinator *as*. Subordinators *if* and *as though* are less frequent:

And **as** *I said earlier*, the speech I made, the announcement we've made, everybody's focused on selective education.

**Clauses of condition** are less used than clauses of manner and the verb *say* is most frequently used within these clauses in speech, while the smallest number of examples with the same verb is found in the culture column. The most dominant type of conditional is open condition within

which the verbs *say* and *ask* are very frequently used in speech. Hypothetical condition is not dominant and somewhat significant number of examples is found in the sports column with the verb *ask* while indirect condition is very rare:

**If** we **had** 10 years of this and were ranked number 16 in the world, you **could ask** a different set of questions.”

Subordinators introducing clauses of condition such as *supposing (that)*, *unless*, *as long as*, *in case*, *if only*, and *given (that)* are very rare, while subordinators *assuming (that)*, *in the event (that)*, *just so (that)*, *on condition (that)*, *providing/provided (that)* and *so long as* are not found in our corpus.

**Reason clauses** frequently occur with the verb *say* in speech, while other verbs are less used within this type of clauses. It is interesting to mention that neither the verb *ask* nor *tell* are used within these clauses in the sports column. The most dominant subordinator that introduces reason clauses is the subordinator *because*. Subordinator *since* introducing these types of clauses only combines with the verb *tell* in short stories the verb *ask* in the column of economy:

Or do you ever have a fear, **because** you say you throw away things that have been extraneous, but sometimes there's something quite lovely in that beginning process.

Not even one example of subordinators *as*, *in view of the fact that*, *now (that)* and *seeing (that)* introducing reason clauses is found.

**Clauses of concession** are frequently combined with the verb *say*, and the greatest number of examples is found in the columns of politics and economy. Verbs *ask* and *tell* are rarely used within these clauses. The most dominant subordinator is subordinator *although* which combines with the verb *say* in all found examples except in speech, where clauses of concession are introduced by subordinators *even if*, *even though* and *whereas*:

It's nothing more than a file of notes at the moment, but I am incredibly excited about it, **even though** I say it myself.

**Clauses of place** occur with the verb *say*, and the most numerous use of this verb is registered in the corpus of speech. Verbs *ask* and *tell* are less used within clauses of place, and never in the corpus of economy. The only subordinator introducing clauses of place is *where*:

And I find myself in situations **where** I wouldn't be asked if not for the fact that I have some kind of profile, which comes from being an actor.

**Clauses of Comparison and Similarity** are not frequent in the cor-

pora we analyzed. The greatest number of examples is found in the corpus of short stories with the verb *tell* and in the culture column with the verb *say*, where all three types of these clauses are registered. The most frequent type of comparison is the comparison with quantitative conjunction *more than* while comparison introduced by *as much as* is less frequent and only verbs *say* and *tell* act as verbals in these clauses:

I know that he wants that very, very much and when a player wants very, very much the chance is bigger ... so I think we have a chance but in football until it's official, I saw so many things happen that I refuse to say more than I am telling you now."

Comparison with adjectives is very rare and it is introduced only by form *better than* in the corpus of short stories and only with verbs *say* and *tell*:

He knew **better than** *saying something like that*, these days.

As for the comparison with manner, distance and time adverbs, the most frequent adverb is *as well as* found with verbs *ask* (short stories), *tell* (technology) and *say* in the columns of culture and politics:

Gamers distracted by display issues told that their consoles are not defective, **as well as** *being told not to play near microwaves, laptops, phones – or aquariums*.

All analyzed verbs are found within **clauses of result**, a somewhat significant number of examples is found in the corpus of short stories with verbs *say* and *tell*. *So (that)* is the only subordinator introducing clauses of results in our corpus:

I didn't have anything either, **so** *I told him I'd come back next day and bring him something.*'

**Clauses of exception** are not frequent and the only subordinator found in our corpus is the subordinator *except* combined with verbs *say* and *tell*, while the verb *ask* doesn't occur within these clauses:

There will not be much he can do either way **except** *tell Klitschko to remain calm*.

**Clauses of proportion** are found with the verb *say* only in the corpus of culture, short stories, sport and technology, and the only structure within which the verb *say* shows up in clauses of proportion is the structure *the less.....the better*:

For the uninitiated, the **less said the better** about this Nicolas Roeg classic meditation on grief and relationships.

**Clauses of contrast** are very rare. The verb *say* is the only verb that

acts as verbal within these clauses, and *while* is the most frequent subordinator. In the corpus of economy and speech only a couple of examples are introduced by the subordinator *whereas*:

*Whereas they could say anything they wanted*, she as a foreigner would have caused offence.

**Examples of clauses of purpose** are not frequent in analyzed material and we found only a couple of examples with each verb. The most frequent subordinator introducing these clauses is *so that*:

Several times he told the driver to let Ellie off, but she wouldn't get out, *so that Robert had to tell him to keep on driving*.

**Clauses of preference** are very rare and are only registered in technology (*say*), culture and short stories (*ask* and *tell*). All examples are introduced by the subordinator *rather than*:

He took the sound of the siren and let a world evolve organically around it, creating a free-form animation that, *rather than tell a story*, delivers emotions through visuals and sound.

The verb *say* is the only verb found within **clauses of contingency** in the corpus of economy, short stories and sport introduced by the subordinator *if*:

It began to happen some evenings that he had somewhere to go and she didn't; but *if she said she had a headache*, he cheerfully stayed home and massaged it for her.

**Comment clauses** are found with the verb *say* in all corpora except in the corpus of culture and technology, and the greatest number of examples is found in the corpus of speech. It is interesting that these examples functioning as parenthetical disjuncts are mostly used in medial position:

PH: Well, Andrew, *as I said earlier*, I think the Europeans are being commendably disciplined in the line that they take, but this will be a negotiation:

As for **clauses of degree**, we found only one example of clause of duration introduced by subordinator *ever since* and combined with the verb *say* in the corpus of economy. Clauses of distance and frequency are not found in analyzed material:

Bank shares have carried the US stock market higher *ever since Trump said it was a priority*.

## Conclusion

The analysis shows that the verb *say* is the most frequently used verb within adverbial clauses, followed by the verb *ask* while the verb *tell* has the lowest frequency in analyzed corpora.

Clauses of time represent the most frequent subclass of adverbial clauses, which are dominant in corpus with all verbs except in the corpus of speech with the verb *say*, where clauses of time, reason and manner are almost equally used. The most numerous subordinator introducing time clauses is *when* with the greatest number of examples found in the corpus of sport with the verb *ask*.

The verb *say* frequently occurs within manner clauses especially in the corpus of speech. On the other hand, the verb *ask* is rarely used within these clauses. The most dominant subordinator introducing these clauses is *as*.

Conditional clauses are less frequent and the greatest number of examples is found with the verb *say* in the corpus of speech. The most dominant type of conditional is open conditional while hypothetical and indirect conditionals are rare.

Reason clauses are frequent only in the corpus of speech with the verb *say*, while they are less frequent with the rest of analyzed verbs. *Because* is the most dominant subordinator introducing these clauses.

The verb *say* is frequently used within clauses of concession while the verbs *ask* and *tell* rarely occur within these clauses. The most frequent subordinator representing this subclass of clauses is *although*.

Only the verb *say* frequently combines with clauses of place. The only subordinator introducing clauses of place is the subordinator *when*.

Analyzed verbs are not frequently used within clauses of comparison and similarity. The greatest number of examples is found in the corpus of short stories with the verb *tell* and culture with the verb *say* where all three subclasses of these clauses are found.

Although very rare, all analyzed verbs are found within clauses of results. The most of these clauses are found in the corpus of short stories with the verb *say* and *tell*, and the only subordinator introducing these clauses is *so (that)*.

Verbs *say* and *tell* rarely occur within clauses of exception, while the verb *ask* doesn't combine with these type of clauses. The greatest number of examples is found in corpora with the verb *say*. The only subordinator



found introducing these clauses is *except*.

The verb *say* is the only verb occurs within adverbial clauses of proportion and contrast clauses. All found examples are only introduced by the structure *the less.... the better* (clauses of proportion) and *while* (contrast clauses).

Our verbs rarely combine with clauses of purpose, and only a few examples are registered in our corpus. The only subordinator introducing these clauses is *so that*.

Analyzed communication verbs rarely occur within clauses of preference and only few examples of these clauses are found in corpora. The only subordinator registered is subordinator *rather than*.

The verb *say* is the only verb acting as the verbal within clauses of contingency, comment clauses and clauses of degree. The only subordinator introducing clauses of contingency is *if*, and as for clauses of degree, we registered only one example in the corpus of economy, introduced by the subordinator *ever since* and with the verb *say*.

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## **GLAGOLI KOMUNIKACIJE ASK, SAY I TELL U OKVIRU ADVERBIJALNIH KLAUZA U PISANOM I GOVORNOM DISKURSU**

### **Rezime**

*Ovaj rad bavi se analizom upotrebe glagola komunikacije say, ask i tell u funkciji verbal koji se javljaju u okviru adverbijalnih klauza u pisanom i govornom diskursu engleskog jezika. Iako je upotreba adverbijalnih klauza široko rasprostranjena, smatramo da postoje određene razlike prilikom upotrebe komunikativnih glagola u okviru određenih potklasa ovih klauza, te je glavni cilj rada prikazati i razliku u učestalosti u upotrebi ova tri glagola u okviru svake od potklasa adverbijalnih klauza.*

*Budući da adverbijalne klauze predstavljaju jednu od većih kategorija zavisnih rečenica, vrlo je važno odrediti u kojoj mjeri su analizirani komunikativni glagoli zastupljeni u pojedinačnim korpusima. Osim toga, cilj je prikazati i karakteristike koje navedeni glagoli ispoljavaju prilikom upotrebe u navedenim diskursima, kao i karakteristične klauze za svaki analizirani glagol. Pored navedenog, istražićemo da li postoje zajedničke karakteristike koju analizirani komunikativni glagoli ispoljavaju prilikom upotrebe u adverbijalnim klauzama, kao i utvrditi karakteristične osobine koje svaki od navedenih glagola ispoljava u određenom diskursu.*

*S obzirom na to da adverbijalne klauze i njihova upotreba nisu dovoljno istražene, smatramo da će ovaj rad dati značajan doprinos u daljnem istraživanju ove vrste zavisnih klauza.*